

Statement Affirming a Christian View of Marriage (1999)

We would define marriage as a (1) publicly recognized covenanting together for life, (2) between a woman and a man who live together in a relationship, (3) characterized by truth and (4) fidelity, and for the purpose of (5) lifelong companion, mutual interdependence and responsibility for each other, and potential procreation. (6) It is symbolic of God's relationship to his people and Jesus Christ's relationship to his church.

1. Publicly recognized.

The public recognition of marriage gives it an important social status. Marriage takes on a public purpose as the cornerstone of the family unity, which in turn is foundational to society. Public recognition implies not only social status, but also social responsibility.

2. Between a man and a woman.

In marriage a man and a woman are united together and become one flesh. Male and female, together being made in the image of God, while different are yet complementary. It is the only union which has the possibility of procreation, the continuance of the species.

3. Characterized by Truth

Truth is a commitment to love and nurture an intimate and mutually supportive relationship characterized by mutual submissiveness and other-centred love.

4. Exclusive

The partners in a marriage relationship commit themselves to maintain the marriage for life. The marriage relationship is between a man and a woman which is exclusive in the emotional and physical intimacy it fosters. It should be characterized by fidelity.

5. Lifelong

Marriage is a type of covenant, that is, a publicly recognized pledge between a woman and a man to fulfill a lifelong commitment for the purposes of companionship and potentially, partnership in procreation.

6. Symbolic of Christ's Relationship to the Church

Marriage is a uniting of dissimilar entities, is symbolic of spiritual unity, and forms an example of co-humanity. The Apostle Paul refers to it as a great mystery (Eph. 5.32) which symbolizes the relationship between Christ and the body of Christ, the Church. It is also the prime relationship within which children are begotten and nurtured. It is the cornerstone of the family.